History and the American Indian

Education Unit

1. Course: American Literature 10TH Grade
2. Unit Goals: Over the course of the next week our class (American Literature) will take a look into the American Indian and how they impacted our literature as a whole. As a lesson in history American Indians were the first people to call our homeland of today home. They were the first to indulge in the American way of life which resulted in the first white people coming over to the new lands having a heavy dependence on Natives for guidance. We will take a look at how these two groups of people communicated with one another even though they didn’t hold a common ground for language or writing. Throughout the week we will take a look at how stories that have been passed down from generation to generation, which eventually were turned into a published novel can have an impact on everyone’s life. The stories take a Native American perspective to exemplify wisdom, ethics and character which can be lessons for living with any individual. I chose to use “The Lakota Way” since it is a relatively easy read which high school students will not find too difficult to read, along with the length is very fitting when considering a week long unit to complete. I also thought the reading was directly related with some of the areas I touch upon during lecture throughout the unit. This is also a fitting assignment for an American Literature class since reading is heavily used in a literature class along with writing and that is why the paper portion of the unit is added at the end.

1. Monday 11/21/11: Introduction to Native American Unit

-Assign each individual student a copy Joseph M. Marshall III “The Lakota Way”

-Brief discussion of Native American History to get a grip on where the mass of the students are at with background information on Natives (Depending on area and age can vary greatly). In Minnesota a 10th grade student will more than likely have very little if any background information so this will be vital for understanding. The discussion may need to go as simple as Natives were living in the US way before any other race of humans.

-Go to computer lab for thirty minutes where students will have to research 10 basic facts about Native Americans citing each website they found the information on. The students will be required to rate the information in order of strongest to weakest facts. This activity will help students identify which websites are stronger than other when performing research along with being able to identify which facts have actually relevance and are not solely written on beliefs or opinions of the creator.

-If students do not finish the assigned classwork in the computer lab they will be asked to finish the rest of the work at home. This assignment is important since I will speak about this activity at the beginning of class tomorrow with quality examples to better our research habits as a collective group.

-Additional homework: Students will be asked to complete the first two stories of “The Lakota Way”

Tuesday 11/22/11: Research Discussion Day

-At the beginning of class, I will have different examples of good and bad research that are clearly on one end of the spectrum in regards to research of Native Americans.

Good Example: Ten Largest American Indian Tribes in the year 2000

Cherokee, Navajo, Latin American Indian, Choctaw, Sioux, Chippewa, Apache, Blackfeet, Iroquois, Pueblo website also broke down the official number of persons in each tribe.

Bad Example: Natives are savages for their outlandish behaviors in our countries early days and that is a direct result to how college and high school athletic teams gained these nicknames.

-Take a look at the fact based information in the first example. The tribes are all listed in numerical order with numbers intact to show how this list was created. Where as in the second example broad generalized statements are made to come to a conclusion about how these athletic teams gained their names. The statements have no factual information to go along with them like in the first example which means it has no validity to go along with the statement. The strength of the second example is very low in a sense to factual information, yet based off opinion the statement is very strong since that is what the person who spoke the words believes.

-Students will break off into groups of four to five with the assignment from the previous day being handed back to them. Here students will discuss which examples they found are better or worse than others examples. I will have each group write down their best fact and worst fact. We will come together as an overall group and go over each one of these statements as a whole.

-Again for homework students will be asked to read the third and fourth chapters of the assigned novel.

Wednesday: 11/23/11: Native Writing Lecture

-In today’s class we will look at how early natives came up with a language in a sense to record different stories along with what was taking place. Even though there was no direct language like today to write in, events that took place could still be recorded in a sense by authors of the time to share what was happening. These writers like modern writers shared stories through relaying messages, the writers than had a much easier task being more of an artist just creating one or very few drawings to describe an event instead of having to use words. If you think about this it is very much the same as a writer such as Shakespeare and his poetry in the English language being used by modern era humans to depict what it is he is actually saying since the language has evolved since Shakespeare’s time.

**-Use this image via overhead to show students an example of what you are speaking about:** http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.wordadaywonder.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/native\_american\_writing.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.wordadaywonder.com/recondite/&h=300&w=419&sz=29&tbnid=3usED9TbXZ9SoM:&tbnh=77&tbnw=108&prev=/search%3Fq%3DNative%2BAmerican%2Bwriting%2Bpictures%26tbm%3Disch%26tbo%3Du&zoom=1&q=Native+American+writing+pictures&docid=4Bgdr-qoEBwGAM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=pnjJTtrQDKv82gW8iZXbDw&ved=0CCwQ9QEwBA&dur=470

-It is interesting to note that Natives put together a system in their head such as this to get history of the time written down in a sense. Historians can go back and look at native drawings to find out specific years and what most likely was being documented.

-These creations by natives were some of the first written stories in a language of their time. It was the first creations of writing to relay stories which relates to the literature of today, even though it has evolved massively it had to start somewhere. It is important to note that heavy translating would more than likely be needed to relay the specifics of the stories since to get the whole thing you would need someone who was actually present. This is not so much the case in today’s world since humans can be fluent in many different languages along with reading skills that are above and beyond humans can read passages from times they weren’t actually there and pretty accurately understand what took place. This shows how well writers have evolved since the beginning with natives drawing pictures almost all the way back to the ice age.

-Important for students to think about translations and the effect they have on writing. Tomorrow in class we will be looking at native translations since whites heavily depended on natives early on in the new world.

-Students will be asked to read the fifth and sixth stories from the assigned reading for homework.

Thursday: 11/24/11: Native Translations Day

-Today we will look at how much the whites actually depended on the natives when they arrived to the new world. It is important to note people such as Sacajawea played important roles in history, even though her role may be most often seen as a navigator she actually was much more of an aid in regards to translating. This aroused the fact that hardly anyone spoke a mutual language so conversing was much more difficult than maybe even fathomable for most. Take for example an American student who goes to foreign place where he/she is unable to speak the language. How difficult would it be to gain anything when conversation is nearly impossible.

-It is also important to note that Lewis and Clark would record many different events that were taking place. These two were very good at writing about what they were viewing but didn’t necessarily understand what was actually taking place. This is important to note since these two as writers were not very reliable sources of information to what was taking place since their writings were much more based on observation than facts. Although their writings can be beneficial to understanding what was taking place, it doesn’t necessarily mean a clear understanding can be achieved to what was taking place. This is much like our facts from Monday and Tuesday class since they are more on the opinion based side than actually backed up with actual fact since the two of them didn’t really understand what was happening.

-Students will then be given time to independently read after our class discussion takes place since tonight they will be asked to finish the seventh, eighth and ninth stories from the assigned reading for homework.

Friday: 11/25/11: Native American Stories

-Many stories that involve the Native American Heritage were stepping stones to modern day fiction that we view often in class. The stories created and passed on by tribes are like fiction in a sense that they usually didn’t really even happen. The reason the stories continued to get passed down is they were strong stories that had positive themes which were the reason the story was being told in the first place. Stories involved characters, plots, climaxes just like the modern day novel. These stories taught natives lessons to go along with the entertainment aspect as well. This is why people enjoy reading is it offers them a form of entertainment along with teaching the reader something.

-Take “The Lakota Way” for example and the stories we have looked so far in class. All of them are native stories from long ago that got passed down through the Lakota People. Like I have previously stated the stories are rich with themes and symbols allowing the stories to hold a sort of prowess with the people.

-Story telling has always been a favorite pastime and will more than likely continue the same path into the future. A major benefit of storytellers today compared to the Native storytellers of long ago is the compensation that writers see is much greater now than the elders back than could even imagine.

-Students will be asked to complete the selected reading over the weekend finishing the last three stories that the book holds. Along with finishing the reading for the weekend students will also be asked to create a summary of their favorite story from the book. Students should highlight what they believe the meaning of the story is, and the themes they took out of it. The student should also provide examples of how the stories can directly relate to their life. There is no minimum page requirement, rather though students should write until they feel that their writing has properly covered what I asked of them. This assignment will be looked at on Monday as a rough draft requiring students to bring in a copy for two different partners, themself and me.

Monday: 11/28/11: Peer Review Day

-Today in class students will split off into partners which I select for them to maximize work instead of socializing. This process will allow the student to get proper changes necessary for their paper to be a success. It will also aid in the student’s overall writing since they will have to look at others work and determine mistakes as well.

-It will be beneficial that all the students have read these stories so they come into the peer review process with prior knowledge instead of just something completely random to them. This will also be a benefit to the writer of the paper since the reviewer knows tidbits which can help if comprehension issues occurred during the creation process of the paper.

-During this time I will circulate the room ensuring the flow of the activity as well as answering questions that arise during the activity.

-Students will then be asked to go home and make the proper adjustments to their papers before they are turned in the following day.

Tuesday: 11/29/11: Test Day

-Before the test starts students will turn in their final product for the paper portion of the unit. This will only take a few minutes followed by a follow up response to how the paper went for the students. What they enjoyed and what they felt was unnecessary throughout the unit.

- Followed by a test for the overall unit that the students will be asked questions from all aspects whether it be in class lectures, activities, readings or discussions.

-This will cap off the week long Native American Unit in American Literature

Sample Test Questions:

Multiple Choice:

1. White people couldn’t communicate with natives upon arrival since there was a lack of common ground in regards to a language, which resulted in what being necessary for communication?
2. Translators (such as Sacajawea)
3. Writing
4. No communication
5. Story Telling
6. Native Stories are closely related to what type of modern day writing?
7. Non-Fiction
8. Science Fiction
9. Fiction
10. Suspense/Thriller
11. The first form of writing that natives used was?
12. Picture Writing
13. English Poetry
14. Spanish
15. Natives didn’t write

True False:

1. T / F: Opinions are a major contributor to good solid facts
2. T / F: There was a heavy dependence on Natives since they claimed the New World first
3. T / F: Today writing is much easier translated than writings of the Natives
4. T / F: Lewis and Clark were spot on with their recordings of native functions they encountered

Short Answer

1. What aspects of modern day literature did native stories hold?
2. Instead of writing how did Natives pass stories down from generation to generation?

Essay

1. How has writing evolved since the natives began to use pictures for documenting events?

**Answers to test**: A, C, A, False, True, True, False,

8. Stories involved characters, themes, plots and climaxes.

9. Through story telling of the elders

10. With the rise of literature throughout time translations and languages have evolved to basically be interchangeable with one another. This means that writings can be translated into a clear meaning regardless of your background or heritage. This has cut out the translator since people can access writings in almost any language. Stories are also not necessarily passed on from generation to generation but more so through interest and finding. Many different genres have been created in writing but it is still used as a means of entertainment still holding the same aspects that it did with the natives.

Work Cited

-Marshall III, Joseph M. the lakota way. Penguin Compass, 1999.

-Word-a-Day-Wonder, "Recondite." Last modified June 11th, 2010. Accessed November 20, 2011. http://www.wordadaywonder.com/recondite/